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Message Text

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AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 220052

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: ELAB
SUBJECT: NEW SOVIET MOVES TOWARD EUROPEAN TRADE UNION UNITY
REFERENCE: ROME 10757 (NOTAL)
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ATTENTION LABOR ATTACHES

1. PRESS REPORTS ON THE 8TH CONGRESS OF THE WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (WFTU) RECENTLY HELD IN VARNA, BULGARIA INDICATE THAT ACTION WAS TAKEN, APPARENTLY SO CORRECTLY FORESHADOWED IN REFTEL, TO CHANGE THE CGIL'S REGULAR MEMBERSHIP STATUS TO A NEW KIND OF /ASSOCIATE/ STATUS WITH THE WFTU. THIS MOVE WAS EVIDENTLY MADE WITH THE SOVIET'S FULL CONCURRENCE IN KEEPING WITH THE EFFORT TO ENHANCE THE CGIL'S ACCEPTABILITY TO THE NON-COMMUNIST ICFTU AFFILIATED TRADE UNIONS OF WESTERN EUROPE FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION. IT HAS ALSO STIMULATED PRESS SPECULATION THAT THE CHANGE REPRESENTS A LOOSENING OF THE CGIL'S TIES WITH THE WFTU AND IMPLIES GROWING CGIL INDEPENDENCE FROM COMMUNIST POLICY CONTROL.

2. AS A FIRST STEP IN EVALUATING THE MEANING OF THIS DEVELOPMENT IN RELATION TO BOTH THE MOVE TOWARD TRADE UNION UNITY IN ITALY AND THE SOVIET OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING LABOR UNITY ON THE BROADER EUROPEAN LEVEL, THE DEPT WOULD LIKE TO VERIFY SOME OF THE BASIC FACTS INVOLVED IN THE REPORTED WFTU ACTION. IT IS HOPED THAT EMBASSY ROME MAY BE IN A FAVORABLE POSITION TO OBTAIN THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FROM LOCAL SOURCES:

A. WHAT FORMAL ACTION WAS IN FACT TAKEN BY THE WFTU WITH RESPECT TO THE CGIL? ARE THERE AVAILABLE ANY TEXTS OF OFFICIAL STATEMENTS ON THIS SUBJECT BY EITHER THE CGIL OR THE WFTU OR BOTH?

B. WHAT IF ANY CHANGE DOES ASSOCIATE STATUS INVOLVE IN A MEMBER'S OBLIGATIONS TO THE WFTU, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO POLICY OBJECTIVES, AND WHAT MODIFICATIONS OF THE WFTU CONSTITUTION ARE BEING MADE TO GIVE EFFECT TO THIS NEW FORM OF AFFILIATION?

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C. FOR PARIS. IS THERE ANY EXPECTATION THAT THE FRENCH CGT MAY ALSO AVAIL ITSELF OF THIS OPTION IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

3. APART FROM THESE QUESTIONS IT WILL BE OF INTEREST TO OBSERVE WHAT IF ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES OCCUR IN THE POLICY POSITIONS OF THE CGIL WHICH WOULD DISTINGUISH IT FROM THOSE OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE USSR

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WITH RESPECT TO BROAD EUROPEAN LABOR-POLITICAL ISSUES. IF, AS THE EMBASSY REPORTED IN REFTEL, THE CGIL LEADERSHIP ANTICIPATED THE VARNA ACTION BY REPLACING ITS SOCIALIST SECRETARY IN CHARGE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS WITH A 'FAITHFUL COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBER IT WOULD APPEAR THAT AN INTERNAL TIGHTENING PROCESS IS TAKING PLACE CONCURRENTLY WITH THE PRESUMED LOOSENING OF TIES WITH THE WFTU. THE EMBASSY'S ASSESSMENT OF THESE AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PERIOD AHEAD WILL OF COURSE BE OF CONTINUING INTEREST.

4. FOR MOSCOW. DEPT IS REPEATING ROME'S 10757 AND WOULD WELCOME ANY COMMENTS THE EMBASSY MIGHT HAVE ON SOVIET TACTICS INVOLVED. RUSH

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